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| --- |
| Jihad ReportApr 04, 2020 -Apr 10, 2020 |
| Attacks | **32** |
| Killed | **144** |
| Injured | **73** |
| Suicide Blasts | **1** |
| Countries | **12** |

**Empty Hospitals, Full Walmart**

 Even as some questions remain about the extent of the outbreak in Washington state, Gov. Jay Inslee Wednesday announced he would return to the federal government the field hospital recently assembled in Seattle’s CenturyLink Field Event Center to help the health care system cope with the new coronavirus.

With the USNS Comfort still stationed in New York, and the USNS Mercy in Los Angeles, Inslee's decision could mark the first return of hospital beds to the federal government during the pandemic from anywhere in the nation. Inslee in recent days has cited more favorable projections for what's to come next in the outbreak of COVID-19 in Washington, the state that at one time led the nation in cases and deaths. As of Wednesday afternoon, there were 9,097 confirmed cases of coronavirus in Washington, with 421 deaths.

The University of Washington's Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation recently sharply reduced its estimate of how many Washingtonians are likely to die from COVID-19, and it has suggested the state may already have passed its peak for COVID-19 hospitalizations. Still, those downward revisions come as state health officials have struggled to post full and timely reports for hospital admissions of patients with suspected or confirmed diagnoses of COVID-19.

In addition to the return of the field hospital, Inslee announced Sunday that he was returning 400 ventilators to the federal government's national stockpile, to assist other states in worse shape. In his statement Wednesday, the governor said the move to disassemble the field hospital will allow the facility to "be deployed to another state facing a more significant need."

The field hospital, which just last week was toured by the Army's chief of staff, never treated a single patient, according to Inslee spokesman Mike Faulk.

Set up about a week ago by hundreds of U.S. Army soldiers, the 250-bed field hospital was intended to handle any overflow of non-COVID-19 patients while area medical centers dealt with the pandemic.

The portable hospital is designed to include intensive-care beds and surgical services, as well as a laboratory, pharmacy and a radiological unit. The 62nd Medical Brigade from Joint Base Lewis-McChord and the 627th Hospital Center and 10th Field Hospital, both based at Fort Carson, Colorado, were assigned to staff the facility.

Washington now has no requests for military medical personnel to assist in the coronavirus response, according to state Military Department spokeswoman Karina Shagren.

"It's possible the 62nd Medical Brigade will stay in the state to support JBLM's response -- or if necessary, they could go to support another field hospital elsewhere," Shagren wrote in an email.

The governor said the hospital was requested "before our physical distancing strategies were fully implemented and we had considerable concerns that our hospitals would be overloaded with COVID-19 cases.

"But we haven't beat this virus yet, and until we do, it has the potential to spread rapidly if we don't continue the measures we've put in place," Inslee added.

In an email, Inslee spokeswoman Tara Lee wrote that other than the field hospital and the 400 ventilators, she wasn't aware of the state returning any other medical supplies to the federal government.

Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan called Inslee's announcement the right decision, because the region's hospitals appear to have enough capacity, ICU beds and ventilators.

"While Seattle fought hard for these resources, it's clear other communities are in desperate need of this high-quality medical facility and personnel," Durkan said. "This virus knows no borders, and we must care for the sick and vulnerable, regardless of any city, county, or state line."

Isolation and quarantine sites being run by King County -- such as the Shoreline Temporary Field Hospital -- remain in operation, according to Chase Gallagher, a spokesman for King County Executive Dow Constantine.

That facility is for people who are unable to isolate and recover from COVID-19 in their own house.

On Tuesday, King County had 39 people using its various quarantine and isolation sites, according to Gallagher.

**Congressional Subpoena Canon Being Loaded**

The Pentagon says a supposed intelligence report cited by ABC News on an emerging COVID-19 pandemic doesn’t exist.

ABC said the report was issued in November by the National Center for [Medical Intelligence](https://m.washingtontimes.com/topics/medical-intelligence/), an arm of the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA). It supposedly warned of a pandemic of what would be later named COVID-19.

Relying on sources who said they saw the report, ABC News said the warning was briefed “multiple times” to the DIA, the staff of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Trump White House.

The Pentagon said it did an exhaustive search and could find no such document.

Col. R. Shane Day, a physician who heads the [medical intelligence](https://m.washingtontimes.com/topics/medical-intelligence/) unit, issued a flat denial.

“As a matter of practice, the National Center for [Medical Intelligence](https://m.washingtontimes.com/topics/medical-intelligence/) does not comment publicly on specific intelligence matters,” Col. Day said. “However, in the interest of transparency during this current public health crisis, we can confirm that media reporting about the existence/release of a National Center for [Medical Intelligence](https://m.washingtontimes.com/topics/medical-intelligence/) Coronavirus-related product/assessment in November of 2019 is not correct. No such NCMI product exists.”

A defense official told The Washington Times, “The center is part of the broader Intelligence Community effort to provide intelligence, expert assessments, and pandemic warning to senior U.S. government leaders, with the critical mission of supporting defense policymakers and U.S. warfighters. NCMI and the Defense Intelligence Agency spent considerable time over the last 24 hours examining every possible product that could have been identified as related to this topic and have found no such product.”

The South China Morning Post reported scientists believe they have found perhaps the first COVID-19 victim on Nov. 17 in Hubei Province, home to Wuhan City, where the virus broke out in December 2019 and spread to the world.

China lied to the World Health Organization in mid-January that the coronavirus wasn’t transmitted human-to-human, according to records. The WHO had people on the ground in Wuhan and could have validated this report within days, but either refused to do it, or they falsified data to support the Chinese assertion. This allowed the virus to be spread to millions of Chinese workers, who would then carry the disease to a dozen countries during and after the Chinese new Year.

Congressional leaders Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer have already begun the legislative process of forming subpoenas to launch at the Trump Administration for phase two of Operation Corona-Scare. In the coming months leading up to the RNC and the election, Democrats plan to use the media empire’s pandemic and its fabricated fatalities to bludgeon President Trump in a demented effort to lower his polling numbers.

**The FISA Counterpunch**

In a wide-ranging, exclusive interview with The Post, President Trump said Wednesday that if House Democrats launched probes into his administration — which he called “presidential harassment” — they’d pay a heavy price.

“If they go down the presidential harassment track, if they want go and harass the president and the administration, I think that would be the best thing that would happen to me. I’m a counter-puncher and I will hit them so hard they’d never been hit like that,” he said during a 36-minute Oval Office sitdown.

The commander-in-chief said he could declassify FISA warrant applications and other documents from Robert Mueller’s probe — and predicted the disclosure would expose the FBI, the Justice Department and the Clinton campaign as being in cahoots to set him up.

“I think that would help my campaign. If they want to play tough, I will do it. They will see how devastating those pages are.”

But Trump told The Post he wanted to save the documents until they were needed.

“It’s much more powerful if I do it then,” Trump said, “because if we had done it already, it would already be yesterday’s news.”

Trump revealed his playbook just as Democrats are [set to take over House committees](https://nypost.com/2018/11/06/networks-declare-democrats-to-capture-control-of-the-house-of-representatives/) in January where they are [poised to investigate](https://nypost.com/2018/11/07/trump-to-dems-threatening-investigation-two-can-play-that-game/) his potential business conflicts of interests, tax returns, Russia dealings and more.

With the GOP losing power in January, its congressional investigations into alleged Department of Justice misconduct in launching the Russia probe is expected to fizzle out.

In September, a group of Trump allies in the House – led by Rep. Lee Zeldin of New York – called on Trump to declassify scores of Justice Department documents they believe undercut the start of the Russia investigation and show bias against Trump.

The documents include Justice officials’ request to surveil Trump campaign adviser Carter Page and memos on DOJ official Bruce Ohr’s interactions with Christopher Steele, the author of a controversial dossier that alleged Trump ties with Russia.

Trump initially agreed to declassify the documents, including text messages sent by former FBI officials James Comey, Andrew G. McCabe as well as Peter Strzok, Lisa Page and Ohr. Trump allies believe the revelations will show favoritism toward Hillary Clinton and a plot to take down Trump. Trump then [reversed course](https://nypost.com/2018/11/07/trump-to-dems-threatening-investigation-two-can-play-that-game/), citing the need for further review and concern of US allies.

Trump added Wednesday that his lawyer Emmet Flood thought it would be better politically to wait.

“He didn’t want me to do it yet, because I can save it,” Trump said.

The president also pushed back on the notion that all the Justice Department documents should eventually be released for the sake of transparency.

“Some things maybe the public shouldn’t see because they are so bad,” Trump said, making clear it wasn’t damaging to him, but to others. “Maybe it’s better that the public not see what’s been going on with this country.”

**The Ancient Mega-Virus**

Evoking visions of mad scientists, French researchers are set to revive a mega-virus dormant for 30,000 years that they discovered in the permafrost of the Russian Arctic.

The researchers, from the French National Center for Scientific Research, say they will take precautions to revive the specimen under safe laboratory conditions. They published a paper detailing their research in the journal the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences . The group of researchers is headed by Jean-Michel Claverie, who runs a laboratory at the French center.

American scientists revived the Spanish Flu virus in 2004 to try to understand its extreme virulence. That virus killed tens of millions of people. The researchers went to Alaska and took samples of lung tissue from a woman who had been buried in permafrost. Using those samples and autopsy tissues, these U.S. scientists pieced together the code for the eight genes. The scientists did the work at what ABC.net calls a “top-security” laboratory of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia.

The French scientists, who awakened another Siberian virus, known as Pithovirus sibericum, in a petri dish in the lab in 2013, warn that climate change may awaken dangerous viruses in areas of the far north where soil or permafrost is melting and believe it is better to ‘know the enemy’. They found it near the same area as the latest discovery, which they named Mollivirus sibericum .

This is the fourth prehistoric virus found since 2003.

Perhaps the most ground-breaking aspect of the research from 2013 and 2015 is the fact that these Siberian viruses don’t resemble any other virus known on Earth. Modern viruses are tiny and have only a few genes. But Pithovirus sibericum and Mollivirus sibericum contain 500 genes, placing it in a new category of viral giant, a family known as Megaviridae. “Sixty percent of its gene content doesn’t resemble anything on Earth,” said Chantal Abergel, a fellow researcher and wife of Claverie.

Another virus, found in 2003, Pandoravirus, has 2,500 genes. In comparison, the HIV virus has only 12, and Influenza A has eight.

The French researchers call the two viruses they found giant viruses. To qualify as a giant virus it has to be more than a half-micron long—1/1000 th of a millimeter.

Pithovirus sibericum is infectious to amoebas but does not appear harmful to human cells, the researchers said. It was found in a 100-foot-deep sample of permanently frozen soil taken from coastal tundra in Chukotka, near the East Siberian Sea.

When they announced the finding of the first virus in 2013, Claverie said: “The revival of viruses that are considered to have been eradicated, such as smallpox, whose replication process is similar to that of Pithovirus, is no longer limited to science fiction. The risk that this scenario could happen in real life has to be viewed realistically.”

Exploration of the Siberian permafrost is expected to increase as it is thought to contain 30 percent of the world’s oil reserves, gold deposits and other key minerals. There is therefore a danger that viruses which humans have never encountered before, and have no immunity to, could emerge from the ice. Claverie called for safeguards against awakening viruses that were once dangerous, such as smallpox.

Ian Branam, a spokesman with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, responded to questions about precautions and safety around virus reanimation. He said in e-mail to Ancient Origins that protocols vary around the world but added:

“Precautions taken include personal protective equipment such as gowns, masks, gloves, shoe covering, etc. Powered respirators are often required as are shower-out procedures when exiting the lab. The lab itself needs to be limited access in a secure facility and have negative air pressure so flow is always into the lab when doors are opened. Waste is sterilized before removal and exhaust air is filtered. Personnel are monitored for any potential symptoms of infection and usually can be asked to record viral signs or check in one or more times a day to confirm no symptoms (fever, etc.)”

When asked how the French scientists could know if the Siberian virus could infect amoebas but not humans, he replied: “Without knowledge of the specifics, it could be because contemporary viruses like it infect amoeba. When obtained, experiments will probably be conducted to see if it is infectious for other organisms using cell lines and possibly animal models if infectivity is suspected on the basis of the in vitro cell lines.”

**Spilt Milk**

Farmers from across the country are being asked to dump their milk this week, as the restaurant and food service demand crumbled rapidly due to COVID-19. From Georgia to Pennsylvania, videos like this are flooding social media. Dairy producers are facing a devastating scenario and being forced to dump milk down the drain. For some dairy farmers, this marks a first.

“This is the first time in the 32 years I’ve been in business that we’ve had to dump milk in the fields,” says Arnie VanDieden, a dairy producer in Texas.

The Texas producer isn’t alone. Paul Hartman in Reading, Penn. has also been in the business more than 30 years and faced a similar scenario earlier this week.

“Our dairy processor told us on Monday,” says Hartman. “They gave a letter that the driver dropped off that said they were supposed to dump our milk for the next two days; they weren't going to pick it up. Right away when we heard it, we were shocked. All we hear is the milk is in demand, the stores are having trouble getting it, and then all of a sudden, they're asking us to dump our milk. So that was kind of confusing.”

Hartman’s processor told him the reason is a backup in demand. As COVID-19 hit, and industries like restaurants and food services saw an abrupt halt I business, the crisis started to unfold.

“We don't have an outlet for this milk,” explains Scott Brown, economist with the University of Missouri. “Even if we have plants able to try to process that milk, there's a little reason to do it at this point due to lack of demand.”

From high-end restaurants to fast food chains, fewer people are eating out and instead, staying at home due to stay-at-home orders. In turn, those consumers are eating fewer pounds of key items like butter and cheese. Therefore, a portion of the nation’s milk supply is without a home.

“The decline in the food service business has not been offset by the increase in the retail side of business,” says Michael Dykes, president and CEO of International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA). “Overnight, we saw a paradigm shift and the business turned upside down.”

The lack of demand from the food service industry is so severe, it’s overshadowing the increase in demand at local grocery stores.

“We don't have the data yet but will likely post record high and fluid milk consumption in the first quarter of 2020,” says Anna-Lisa Laca, editor of Farm Journal’s MILK. “Unfortunately, that's not being offset by restaurant demand, and it's not being offset by our lack of ability to export dairy products in a meaningful way at the moment.”

IDFA says with fewer restaurants and food services open for normal business, IDFA estimates 10% of the nation’s milk supply is without a home for the foreseeable future.

“That is staggering,” says Dykes. “I think the reason why you're seeing the reports of dumped milk. This has happened so quickly that the markets can’t adjust.”

Dykes says with the loss of essential demand, IDFA and other dairy groups are lobbying for dairy to be distributed to those who need it most, utilizing current government food programs, especially as unemployment rates grow to levels the U.S. hasn’t seen in nearly 100 years.

“We need to make sure that America's food banks are replenished,” says Dykes. “When we look at what they're suggesting, foods banks are buying 10 times as much food as they were on a six-month basis, from $50,000 to $500,000. They're estimating they need $1.4 billion of food. So, we need to work with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to make sure that food in the food banks is there. Our industry has it, and Americans needed it.”

While Dykes is in favor of government buying for both domestic and international food aid programs, he doesn’t want to see the government implement a program that artificially boosts prices short-term, acting as a wet blanket on the market later on. Individuals don’t really change the amount of milk they consume. But, when outlets for milk are forced by government through fines and arrests to close, people don’t have access to milk or milk products, such as cheese, gravies, and sauces.

Government bandaids only make the problem worse. Adding bureaucratic influences to a free market is fascism in its purest form. Those kinds of programs may sound good on the surface, and we like it when the government is buying an distributing milk or cheese to various needy consumers, but we don't like it when the government holds on to it for a long time, and then when they start selling, it depresses the market for years. It is sort of like when the government orders a million chrome hammers. The hammer makers love it, until the new hammers are auctioned off in shipping containers for pennies on the dollar. Those hammer flood the market on ebay, Big Lots, and other liquidation outlets, which suppresses new hammer manufacturers, again. So, what usually happens, is that the government buries the containers of hammers.

I recall a heavy equipment operator I interviewed years ago, when he reported doing some maintenance on dirt roads that had been washed out above San Diego. The Marines did exercises up there, and they needed to be able to drive the vehicles in and out. While cutting the road bank back to widen a curve, his dozer smashed into a large crate, tearing it open. Out spilled thousands of brand new hammers. He stopped and called it in. They ordered him to rebury the hammers, for the reason I just mentioned. I’m sure they checked his lunchbox when he turned in his equipment that day.

I say this, because the same thing happens in other markets. Government buying for food banks could help dairy find a new home for now, but the it just kicks the can down the road as milk futures continue to tailspin. Muted milk prices are putting immense financial pressure on dairy producers, because they have debt service and overhead that never goes away. Cows don’t just lower milk output according to the market. Any dairy farmer will tell you that cows have to be milked on a regular schedule.

“We have to take this first 60 to 90 day window, which to me is going to be the toughest and the hardest to survive, and we need to think about the programs that can get money in producers’ pockets or get help and producers pockets as quickly as possible,” says Brown.

As short-term financial frustrations mount, Hartman and other producers are also frustrated with what they are seeing at some grocery stores. As they are dumping dairy down the drain, some retailers are limiting the amount of milk a shopper can buy during a time when the supply is there, and dairy leaders say logistics are working.

“If they're being asked grocery store to only take one gallon of milk, I would get after the grocery store and say, ‘why am I allowed to get one gallon when dairy farmers are dumping milk,’” says Hartman. “Let's take off those restrictions and let people buy as much milk as they can.”

Dykes agrees with urging retailers to remove restrictions on dairy. He says the supply is there and limits on buying aren’t necessary.

“Our members are getting the milk to the grocers,” says Dykes. “The milk is there. We need to remove those signs at any grocery store. There should be no limits on how much milk or any dairy product any consumer can purchase. It is available. Our members are getting it there, and our members are processing the milk.”

Dykes says the supply is there, as processors and food companies are going the extra mile to ensure dairy isn’t missing from refrigerators at any retail location. With COVID-19, he says that is no easy task.

“Our members are going above and beyond to make the make the product available,” says Dykes. “For example, if they weren't doing three shifts a day, many of them have gone to three shifts, they've extended the hours and they are they're maximizing the output through the plants, all the while preserving food safety. Our members are going above and beyond to make sure that the supply chain is has the product in it for the consumers.”

Locking down the economy doesn’t put the whole process on hold. It is more like turning the key off on your vehicle at 80 miles an hour. You lose power brakes and steering. In other words, the world keeps rolling, but you can’t control it. The only solution is to never shut it down in the first place.

“I think the first couple days milk was like toilet paper, it went off the shelf and nobody could find anything anywhere,” says North. “Now that we have caught up to that, that is no longer the case and that sign can go away and should go away. Let's face it; if somebody wants to walk in and buy three or four gallons of milk, let them do it, because on the other side of this, we are dumping milk and the reality is our processors are running around the clock right now doing everything they can to keep up with the demand where there is demand. And it's for the retail space, and that is in the form of a gallon of milk. Take that sign down because the producer the producers are ready to put that on the shelf.”

Waning Outlooks

As those in the dairy industry lobby for more demand or financial help in other ways, outlooks from farmers are waning.

“At first, it looked like 2020 was going to be a pretty good year, and man did that turn on a dime,” says Hartman.

VanDieden says their family is cutting back on inputs, to try to feed their cows a little cheaper during this tough time. He and other producers are in survival mode, hoping better days for dairying are ahead.

“Since we are shortcutting supply, I believe on the backside of this it does start to open some doors for us to see some better prices,” says North. “Maybe 2020 finishes a lot better than it looks today; cross your fingers”

**Bad Chinese**

Rep. Lance Gooden (R-TX) recently [proposed](https://www.breitbart.com/radio/2020/04/07/rep-lance-gooden-allow-doj-investigate-china-coronavirus-bioweapon/) legislation to [allow](https://www.breitbart.com/politics/2020/04/03/lance-gooden-proposes-to-investigate-chinese-origins-of-coronavirus/) the Department of Justice (DOJ)  to investigate China for potential release of a biological weapon reaching American soil. His proposed bill would amend the Foreign Sovereign Immunity Act to allow the DOJ to investigate the origins of the coronavirus pandemic and grant jurisdiction to U.S. courts over the matter, allowing the DOJ to file claims against the Chinese Communist Party in America.

Mosher also called for “reparations” to be collected from China by the U.S. and other countries affected by the coronavirus.

“I think we have to move forward on a lot of fronts,” Mosher said. “Take the Belt and Road initiative, for example. China has built roads and ports and other infrastructure projects in countries around the world, and it has given loans to countries to build those projects, which of course are built by Chinese military construction battalions who are paid out of the loan, so China gets paid twice, right?”

Countries involved with China’s One Belt One Road initiative should refuse to repay loans extended to them by China as compensation for the one-party state’s responsibility for the coronavirus pandemic, determined Mosher.

Mosher remarked, “[China] loans Kenya money to build a railroad, and then Kenya turns around and takes the loan to pay the Chinese construction workers who built it. So the money comes back to China and then they have to pay back the loan. But what Kenya should do — and what all the countries on the Belt and Road should do — is say to China, ‘We have suffered a hundred billion dollars, or five hundred billion dollars, whatever the case may be in losses because of the Chinese coronavirus, and so we’re not going to pay you back your loan and we’re not going to allow you to expropriate the port and the railroad that you built. We’re just going to default on the loan, and you can like it or lump it, but that’s what’s going to happen.'”

On Wednesday, [Gordon Chang](https://twitter.com/GordonGChang) called for America to coordinate with allies to seize China’s holdings of U.S. Treasury obligations, as well as the obligations from the treasuries of other countries, as compensation for the one-party state’s misconduct in causing the viral outbreak. “I think the United States should seize China’s holdings of U.S. treasuries,” he [said](https://www.breitbart.com/radio/2020/04/09/gordon-chang-seize-chinas-u-s-treasury-holdings-in-conjunction-with-allies/).

The coronavirus epidemic presents an opportunity to end totalitarianism in China, estimated Mosher.

“I think [we] ought to be moving forward on six or seven fronts and put as much pressure on the Chinese Communist Party and its leaders at this point in time as possible,” Mosher stated. “These regimes appear almost invincible from the outside. They’re like diamonds. Very, very hard, but a proper blow from a hammer struck at just the right angle can shatter a diamond into a thousand pieces.

Mosher concluded, “Who would have thought the Soviet Union would have collapsed, and yet we brought enough pressure on them at a key point in time, so that happened. It can happen in China, too, and for the good of the world — and for the good of the Chinese people — it has to happen sooner rather than later.”

**Fire Sale Warning**

Brexit Party leader Nigel Farage has warned that Chinese interests are lining up to take advantage of the coronavirus crisis by buying “vast swathes of our strategic and manufacturing industries”.

“What is happening right now is that Chinese companies and Chinese money are lining up for what they expect to be a ‘fire sale’ of British businesses,” Mr Farage [said](https://www.facebook.com/nigelfarageofficial/videos/518259858879194/) during a Facebook live stream on Wednesday.

Mentioning that Germany has put into law [protections](https://uk.finance.yahoo.com/news/coronavirus-germany-beefs-up-law-to-block-foreign-takeovers-141011579.html) for German companies against foreign takeover during the coronavirus crisis, he continued: “I fear, we’re going to allow China in to buy up vast swathes of our strategic and manufacturing industries and it just can’t be allowed.

“The problem is is the same mob that sold us out to Brussels are now happy to sell out our sovereignty once again to China and this needs a much bigger, higher, level of debate.”

Last month, Chinese firm Jingye Group [bought out](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-51795414) British Steel. Former Prime Minister David Cameron and former Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne [allowed](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/oct/18/david-cameron-dismisses-risk-of-rift-with-us-over-china) Chinese state-run companies to invest in British nuclear power plants.

Farage: Huawei in UK 5G May Be Price for Accepting China’s Coronavirus Aid [https://www.breitbart.com/europe/2020/04/07/farage-fears-having-china-uk-5g-price-accepting-chinese-coronavirus-aid/ …](https://t.co/mCgrCfsoj7)

Mr Farage said: “For some reason, many of our civil servants, politicians, and Big Business figures seem to be in love with the despicable, barbarous regime who don’t just murder thousands of their own people every year, but put hundreds of thousands in camps… where they’re being re-educated away from their faith to support the Chinese Communist Party.

“It’s not a nice regime. We know they steal intellectual property and we know they have designs to effectively become the global superpower, to take over the world in their own way.”

The Brexit Party leader’s remarks come as MPs have launched an emergency House of Commons inquiry into the possibility of Chinese companies stripping the assets of British firms caught up in the pandemic crisis, particularly the high-tech companies which are fundamental to the UK’s economy.

Led by Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee Tom Tugendhat, the inquiry would look into how the Foreign Office could take an active role in blocking Chinese asset-stripping.

The investigation was provoked by the aborted boardroom coup of UK chip designer Imagination Technologies by associates of Chinese government-backed China Reform Holdings. The move was delayed after culture secretary Oliver Dowden intervened.

With the UK and other Western nations turning to China for vaccines, masks, and ventilators, Mr Farage said last month that the coronavirus pandemic had exposed the developed world’s dependence on China in its supply chains.

“The West’s supply chains have become too dependent on China,” the Brexit Party [said](https://www.breitbart.com/europe/2020/03/20/farage-coronavirus-reveals-western-supply-chains-dependence-china/), adding: “To see China now exploiting a crisis that they have caused to spread their influence further and deeper into Europe should send a chill down our spines.”

This week, he [warned](https://www.breitbart.com/europe/2020/04/07/farage-fears-having-china-uk-5g-price-accepting-chinese-coronavirus-aid/) that accepting materials from China could come at the price of allowing the Beijing-backed Huawei access to Britain’s 5G network

**Gun Rationing in California**

Governor Ralph Northam (D) signed legislation Friday creating universal background checks in Virginia and limiting law-abiding Virginians to one handgun purchase per month.

Northam’s office [announced](https://www.governor.virginia.gov/newsroom/all-releases/2020/april/headline-856016-en.html) his signature on Senate Bill 70 / House Bill 2, creating the universal checks and thereby outlawing private gun sales.

He signed Senate Bill 69 / House Bill 812 resurrecting Virginia’s “one-handgun-a-month rule to help curtail stockpiling of firearms and trafficking.”

Northam [used a tweet](https://mobile.twitter.com/GovernorVA/status/1248632366316347394) to refer to these gun controls as “commonsense gun safety measures,” but he did not mention that they would not have prevented the May 31, 2019 Virginia Beach shooting that he used as an impetus for gun control.

He also signed other controls into law, including requirements that gun owners report stolen firearms within 48 hours of the theft or face “civil penalty.” This puts the onus for a gun theft on the gun owner, rather than the individual who stole the firearm.

Democrats won control of Virginia’s legislature in November 2019 and, just days after their victory, Northam [made clear](https://www.breitbart.com/politics/2019/11/08/ralph-northam-plans-war-guns-democrats-take-virginia-legislature/) there would be a war on guns. That war originally included all-out bans on certain categories of firearms, on ammunition magazines holding more than ten rounds, and on firearm suppressors. However, Democrats reformulated their push after facing widespread public backlash over their gun control agenda.

Well over [100 local governments](https://www.breitbart.com/politics/2019/12/20/2nd-amendment-foundation-applauds-virginia-gun-right-sanctuaries/) in Virginia declared Second Amendment Sanctuary status in response to the gun control push, and some law enforcement officials were vocal in their opposition to new controls as well.

**Drugs in Exchange for Brains**

India’s president is linking the delivery of U.S.-purchased hydroxychloroquine medicine to his demand that President Donald Trump help India’s outsourcing workers stay past the expiration of their work visas, says a report in one of India’s leading newspapers.

The Hindustan Times reported on April 10:

The Indian government has asked the US to extend the validity of visas, including H-1B and other types of visas, held by Indian nationals who have been hit by the Covid-19-related economic slump, people familiar with developments said on Friday.

Foreign secretary Harsh Shringla took up the matter during his telephone conversation with US deputy secretary of state Stephen Biegun on Wednesday, when the two sides also discussed ways to enhance cooperation to counter the pandemic and ensure the availability of essential medicines [hydroxychloroquine] and equipment.

“We have been in touch with the US government, requesting them to extend the validity of visas of Indian nationals – H-1B and other types of visas – who are stranded in the US due to the pandemic,” said one of the people cited above, speaking on condition of anonymity. “We are closely monitoring related developments,” the person added, without giving details.

The demand is a tough sell for Trump, who has yet to implement his March 2016 promise to end the H-1B visa’s role as a cheap-labor program for many Fortune 500 companies in the United States.

But India’s government and economy rely on the wealth earned by “Non-Resident Indians” in the United States — and the coronavirus crash is sending hundreds of thousands back home during the next several months. Still, the departure of hundreds of thousands of India’s college graduate visa workers would be a huge gain for many swing-voting, middle class American voters in 2020 — and for the politicians who needed their votes.

U.S. visa worker rules include a superstructure of many clever and complex exceptions and loopholes, all of which are designed to help U.S. investors and CEOs freely hire and fire large blocs of cheap, male, Indian visa workers. The set of complex rules also allows executives to bypass the many workplace rules and anti-discrimination laws that Congress adopted to help all American professionals win the jobs and careers needed for a middle class life.

But the system-wide, virus-induced, sudden economic crash has overwhelmed the clever complexity by causing a semi-hidden avalanche of layoffs, and pay cuts — and the underlying laws and regulations say that laid off visa workers must go home in 60 days and prevent companies from keeping a reserve army of visa workers on reduced pay or reduced hours.

The joint U.S.-Indian outsourcing group, NASSCOM, has already asked the Department of Labor to help U.S. and Indian companies rewrite the basic wage and job promises made to hundreds of thousands of visa workers, including about 900,000 resident H-1B workers.

Employers have quietly converted an imported army of 451,000 Indian temporary workers into permanent U.S.-based workers. Also, India’s Congress is demanding that Indian President Narendra Modi use his control over the hydroxychloroquine supply to protect the nation’s huge population of well-paid visa workers in the United States.

Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said after compromising the “India First” policy in the HCQ drug climb-down, the government is again failing to secure the safety and livelihood of Indians in the US.

“Time for the prime minister to ensure that our soft power of ‘Namaste Trump’ converts into fair treatment of H-1B visa holders in the US,” Surjewala said, noting that the US has put Americans on a temporary paid leave or allowed them to work for reduced hours in the wake of the pandemic.

But “the sword of H-1B visa job terminations” looms large over an estimated 75,000 Indians, with the United States giving them only a 60-day period to find a new job in case of a lay off, he said.

Trump called Modi on April 4 after India announced an export ban on the pills. “I called Prime Minister Modi of India this morning … and I said I’d appreciate it if they would release the amounts that we ordered,” Trump told reporters on April 4, adding:

They make large amounts of hydroxychloroquine — very large amounts, frankly. They had a hold [on exports], because, you know, they have 1.5. billion people, and they think a lot of it. And I said I’d appreciate it if they would release the amounts that we ordered

But we have already 29 million [doses in stock]. That’s a big number. Twenty-nine million doses. And we’ve got millions of doses that are being made here and many millions of doses that are made elsewhere that are being shipped here, and it will be arriving…

But there’s a lot of very positive things happening with that. That’s a game changer if that’s the case. Obviously, we continue to work on the vaccines, but the vaccines have to be down the road by probably 14, 15, 16 months. Two days later, Modi approved the export of many hydroxychloroquine pills.

On April 8, Foreign Secretary Harsh Shringla linked the offer of pills — “the availability of essential medicines” — to the H-1B visa issue, according to the Hindustan Times. Trump cemented the deal by publicly thanking Modi on April 8, likely after the meeting between Shringla and Trump’s deputy, Biegun.

Extraordinary times require even closer cooperation between friends. Thank you India and the Indian people for the decision on HCQ. Will not be forgotten! Thank you Prime Minister @NarendraModi for your strong leadership in helping not just India, but humanity, in this fight!

Officials have not said if Trump will help the Indian visa workers before America’s college graduates vote in November — or if he will take minor steps to provide a face-saving excuse for Modi.

But a growing network of U.S. graduate groups is pressuring Trump to implement his campaign promise to protect graduates from the outsourcing business. In March 2016, after much zig-zagging, Trump declared:

“The H-1B program is neither high-skilled nor immigration: these are temporary foreign workers, imported from abroad, for the explicit purpose of substituting for American workers at lower pay. I remain totally committed to eliminating rampant, widespread H-1B abuse and ending outrageous practices such as those that occurred at Disney in Florida when Americans were forced to train their foreign replacements. I will end forever the use of the H-1B as a cheap labor program, and institute an absolute requirement to hire American workers for every visa and immigration program. No exceptions.”

**Mars Helicopter Drone to Launch**

The newest Mars rover's pioneering passenger has come aboard.

Technicians attached the first-of-its-kind [Mars Helicopter](https://www.space.com/mars-helicopter-last-spin-on-earth-perseverance-rover.html) to the belly of NASA's Perseverance rover on Monday (April 6) at the agency's Kennedy Space Center in Florida, where the robot is being prepped for its upcoming launch. That liftoff will take place during a three-week window that opens on July 17.

Prep work on the rover is officially in high gear. For example, over a four-day span in late March, mission team members finished installing Perseverance's parachute system and also [put on the robot's six wheels](https://www.space.com/mars-rover-perseverance-wheels-parachutes.html).

Perseverance's descent stage was also fueled up last weekend, just before the helicopter integration, NASA officials said.

The descent stage is the rocket-powered sky crane that will lower Perseverance onto the Martian dirt via cables in February 2021. Gassing up the crane was no trivial task; the craft's four tanks hold a total of 884 lbs. (401 kilograms) of hydrazine propellant, agency officials said.

"The last hundred days before any Mars launch is chock-full of significant milestones," David Gruel, the Mars 2020 assembly, test and launch operations manager at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) in Pasadena, California, [said in a statement](https://www.jpl.nasa.gov/news/news.php?feature=7636). (JPL built Perseverance and is the lead center for the rover's mission, which is called [Mars 2020](https://www.space.com/39984-mars-2020-rover.html).)

"Fueling the descent stage is a big step," Gruel added. "While we will continue to test and evaluate its performance as we move forward with launch preparations, it is now ready to fulfill its mission of placing Perseverance on the surface on Mars."



That placement will occur inside Jezero Crater, a 28-mile-wide (45 kilometers) hole in the ground that hosted a lake and a river delta in the Red Planet's ancient past. Perseverance will hunt for signs of long-dead Martian life, characterize the region's geology and perform a number of other tasks, chief among them collecting and caching samples for a [future return to Earth](https://www.space.com/mars-sample-return-plan-nasa-esa.html).

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The Mars 2020 mission will also demonstrate several new technologies, including an instrument that will generate oxygen from the carbon-dioxide-dominated Martian atmosphere and the 4-lb. (1.8 kg) Mars Helicopter, which will be the first rotorcraft ever to ply the skies of a world beyond Earth.

If all goes according to plan, the helicopter will be deployed in May 2021, 2.5 months after Perseverance's touchdown. The little solar-powered chopper will then conduct a series of short flights during a test campaign that will last up to 30 days. The Mars Helicopter won't gather any scientific data during these excursions; it carries no instruments. But a successful test campaign could pave the way for [extensive aerial exploration of the Red Planet](https://www.space.com/mars-helicopter-nasa-space-exploration.html) in the not-too-distant future, mission team members have said.